National Aeronautics and Space Administration

A Look at NASA

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NASA Weekly Update

Week of April 2 – 9, 2007

April 2: NASA Nobel Prize Recipient to Lead Chief Scientist Office: NASA's new Science Mission Directorate Associate Administrator Alan Stern has appointed NASA scientist and 2006 Nobel Prize recipient John Mather to lead the Office of the Chief Scientist at Headquarters in Washington. Mather and his staff in the newly created office will be chief advisors to Stern. In October 2006, Mather and George Smoot of the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, Berkeley, Calif., received the Nobel Prize for Physics for their collaborative work in understanding the Big Bang.

April 10: NASA Holds Teleconference Update on Shuttle Repair Work: NASA will host a media teleconference Tuesday, April 10 no earlier than 6 p.m.

The barge carrying external tank 117 is maneuvered toward the dock by a tug boat in the turn basin of Kennedy's Launch Complex 39 area.

EDT to discuss the space shuttle Atlantis' external fuel tank, which was damaged during a Feb. 26 hail storm. The teleconference follows a meeting to decide whether the tank will be used for the shuttle's upcoming mission, STS-117. NASA will stream live audio of the event at: http://www.nasa.gov/newsaudio. For STS-117 crew and mission information, visit: http://www.nasa.gov/shuttle.

April 11: NASA Media Briefing on Mission to Study Earth's Highest Clouds: NASA will host a media teleconference on Wednesday, April 11 at 2 p.m. EDT to discuss science objectives of the Aeronomy of Ice in the Mesosphere (AIM) mission. AIM is scheduled to launch April 25 from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., aboard a Pegasus launch vehicle. It will measure high altitude noctilucent ("night shining") clouds to determine why they form and vary, which may be linked to climate change. Audio of the teleconference will stream live at: http://www.nasa.gov/newsaudio. Supporting images will be posted concurrent with the briefing at: http://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/aim/AIM_L14_media.html. For more information about the AIM mission, visit: http://www.nasa.gov/aim.

April 4: NASA Shared Services Center Recognized for Excellence: NASA's Shared Services Center was named runner-up for the Best New Shared Services Organization Excellence Award, which recognizes the most successful shared services organization launched within the last three years. For information about the NASA Shared Services Center, visit: http://www.nssc.nasa.gov.

April 3: NASA FINDS Arctic Replenished Very Little Thick Sea Ice in 2005: A new NASA study has found that in 2005 the Arctic replaced very little of the thick sea ice it normally loses and replenishes each year. Replenishment of this thick, perennial sea ice each year is essential to the maintenance and stability of the Arctic summer ice cover. The findings complement a NASA study released in fall 2006 that found a 14-percent drop in this perennial ice between 2004 and 2005. The lack of replenishment suggests that the decline may continue in the near future. For more information about QuikScat, visit: www.nasa.gov/centers/jpl/missions/quickscat.html.

April 3: NASA Selects 18 Small Business Technology Transfer Projects: NASA has selected 18 Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) research proposals for Phase 2 contract negotiations. The selected STTR projects have a total value of approximately $11 million. The STTR contracts will be awarded to 17 small, high technology firms in 10 states. The goals of the program are to stimulate technological innovation, increase the use of small businesses in meeting federal research and development needs, and increase private sector commercialization of innovations derived from federally-funded research. Additional information about the program and a complete listing of the selected companies is available at: http://sbir.nasa.gov.

Weekly Status Reports

Space Shuttle

Atlantis
Mission: STS-117 - 21st International Space Station Flight (13A) - S3/S4 Truss Segment Solar Arrays
Vehicle: Atlantis (OV-104)
Location: Vehicle Assembly Building
Launch Date: Targeted for no earlier than May 2007
Launch Pad: 39A
Crew: Sturckow, Archambault, Reilly, Swanson, Forrester and Olivas Inclination/Orbit Altitude: 51.6 degrees/122 nautical miles

Endeavour
Mission: STS-118 - 22nd International Space Station Flight (13A.1) -
S5 Truss Segment
Vehicle: Endeavour (OV-105)
Location: Orbiter Processing Facility Bay 2
Launch Date: Targeted for June 28, 2007
Launch Pad: 39A
Crew: Kelly, Hobaugh, Williams, Morgan, Mastracchio, Caldwell and Anderson
Inclination/Orbit Altitude: 51.6 degrees/122 nautical miles

Discovery
Mission: STS-122 - 24th International Space Station Flight (1E) - Columbus Laboratory
Vehicle: Discovery (OV-103)
Location: Orbiter Processing Facility Bay 3
Launch Date: Targeted for Fall 2007
Launch Pad: 39A
Crew: Frick, Poindexter, Walheim, Love, Melvin, Schlegel and Eyharts
Inclination/Orbit Altitude: 51.6 degrees/122 nautical miles

International Space Station (ISS)

Two Russian cosmonauts and a space flight participant launched aboard a Soyuz spacecraft from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan at 12:31 p.m. CDT Saturday for a two-day flight to the International Space Station. Less than 10 minutes after launch their spacecraft reached orbit and its antennas and solar arrays deployed. The Soyuz TMA-10 spacecraft is scheduled to dock at the station at a little after 3 p.m. Monday.

Once they arrive at the station, Cosmonauts Fyodor Yurchikhin, Expedition 15 commander, and Oleg Kotov, Expedition 15 flight engineer, and spaceflight participant Charles Simonyi, a U.S. businessman, will be greeted by the station's current crew, Expedition 14 Commander Michael Lopez-Alegria and flight engineers Mikhail Tyurin and Suni Williams. Information on the crew's activities aboard the space station, future launch dates, as well as station sighting opportunities from anywhere on the Earth, is available on the Internet at: http://www.nasa.gov/station.

Upcoming Events

- **April 18:** Landing of the Expedition 14 crew at Kazakhstan's Baikonur Cosmodrome. The crew includes Commander Michael Lopez-Alegria, Flight Engineer Mikhail Tyurin, and Flight Engineer Sunita Williams.
- **April 21:** Near Field Infrared Experiment (NFIRE) launch from NASA Wallops Flight Facility on an Orbital Sciences Minotaur-1 vehicle.
- **April 25:** Aeronomy of Ice in the Mesosphere (AIM) launch from Vandenberg Air Force Base on an Orbital Sciences Pegasus XL vehicle.
- **Targeted for May:** Launch of Space Shuttle Atlantis from Kennedy Space Center for mission STS-117 to the International Space Station.

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